



**General Certificate of Secondary Education**

**English/English Language**

**Specifications 4700/4705**

**Unit 2 (Speaking & Listening)**

**Report on the Examination**

*2011 Examination – June series*

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*Andrew Hall Director General.*

## **GCSE English/English Language 4700/4705**

### **Principal Moderator's Unit 2 (*Speaking and Listening*) Report**

#### **Summer 2011**

Entry for Unit 2 was first allowed in June 2011, and from now on is available twice a year.

All centres should have received and be referring to the 2010/11 DVD, filmed at Saffron Walden in Essex. This DVD shows a range of activities across Presenting, Discussing and Listening and Role Playing. Teachers at regional meetings have responded positively to the range of activities, the content of the talk and the assessments that have been explained in the detailed commentaries.

A further set of materials filmed at Saffron Walden will be made available to teachers as part of the Autumn round of meetings. This will mean that centres will have, in total, 21 activities and 46 assessments to refer to when making their own judgements on candidates.

The assessments on the DVDs have been arrived at through a close application of the criteria, using appropriate descriptors across the three columns (Communicating and Adapting Language, Interacting and Responding, Creating and Sustaining Roles). Starting in March, the centre visits schedule began. Advisers have been asked to make sure that centres are familiar with DVDs, and that the assessments which are made during the visit refer directly to the standards set on the DVDs. So, for example, an advisor who says that 'candidate x is slightly better than Ryan' will expect this reference to be understood. It has though been disappointing to hear from some advisers that some centres do not seem to be as familiar with the exemplified standards as they should be.

In addition there have been some reports from advisers suggesting that in some centres there has been insufficient engagement with the new criteria – and that marks are being awarded with vague reference to the legacy criteria. It is true that in broad terms Speaking and Listening has not changed a great deal from old to new specifications. Centres must also realise, though, that this is a new unitised GCSE, with new criteria that must be applied.

Many teachers and advisers have found it useful that each of the five mark bands has a 'headline' label – so for example band 5 is labelled 'sophisticated and impressive'. This helps to highlight the sort of work, and the sort of content, that is required at this level. So, for example, the topic under discussion needs to have sufficient depth and scope to enable candidates to work at a 'sophisticated' level. Some advisers report that this is not always the case, especially when literary texts have been the source of such discussion, and factual recall/character study form the bulk of the subject matter. When teachers submit marks for this unit no other paperwork is required and nothing should be sent to a moderator for other units. Teachers do though need to keep ongoing records for Speaking and Listening. All records for all students must be available for monitoring by a visiting adviser. These should be retained until each such visit has taken place – so for example it could be that 3 years' worth of records are retained.

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The adviser will also expect to learn about the centre's methods of internal standardisation. Ideally these will combine a number of methods: watching AQA DVDs; collaborating in class rooms; special help for NQTs; checking centre marks against other components etc. All of this takes time of course, but this unit carries a significant weighting and so needs the care and attention to detail that is given to the written controlled assessments.

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